

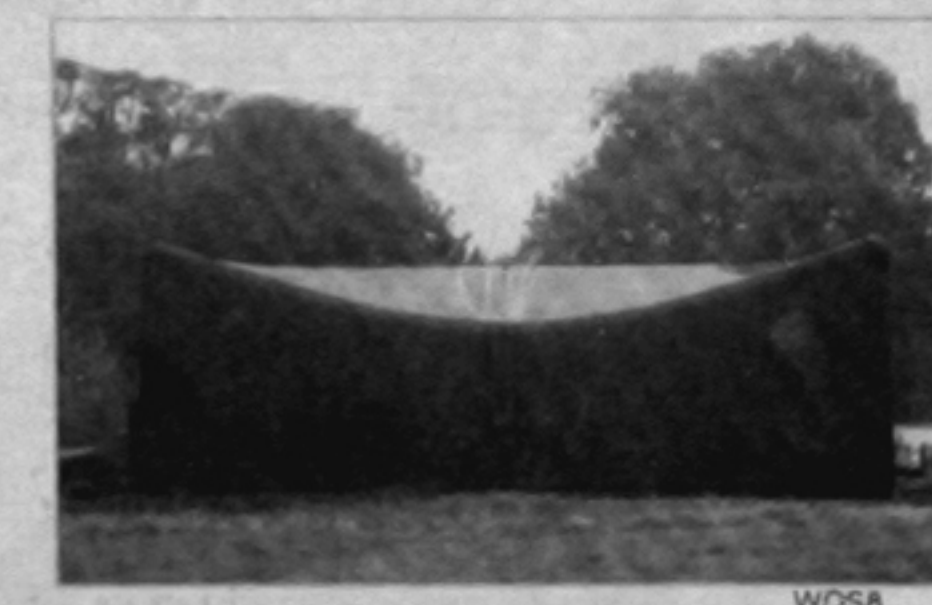
BIG SOFT ORANGE

Dutch architecture has become as prominent at the end of the 20th century as it was at the beginning. Following in the wake of Rem Koolhaas's emergence as one of the most influential architects in the world today, a host of young Dutch architecture offices are now themselves gaining worldwide attention. Like Koolhaas, these offices are interested in the BIG. They focus, however, not on the big building—though they are certainly fascinated by its potential—but on the possibilities offered by exploiting a new emphasis on quantity in the Netherlands and elsewhere in the world. As a result of VINEX, The Fourth Report on Physical Planning in the Netherlands, the Dutch government has mandated that 1,100,000 new dwellings be built by the year 2005. This undertaking is quantitatively equivalent to the entire post-war reconstruction effort in Holland. Such a turn to the **BIG** has necessitated the development of a new disposition towards the practice of architecture itself. Among these Dutch offices, for example, there is a de-emphasis on the kind of aestheticized form generation that dominated architecture in the 1980s and early 1990s, and a renewed emphasis on the analysis and manipulation of material and immaterial processes, logics and codes. Indeed, the growing importance of scenario planning, profiling, as well as other temporally-based steering mechanisms signals an emergent **SOFT** approach to the practice of architecture prevalent among all four offices featured in this exhibition. Another related feature of this soft approach is an avowed post-avant-garde acceptance of the market as a condition of contemporary architectural and urban practice. Unlike early 20th century avant-gardes which wanted to clear away what was already there in order to establish a new social order, and unlike the avant-gardes of the 1980s which sought to resist the market they found already there, these offices focus very precisely on what is "just there," on the constraints and limitations of a global market which they see not as an evil to be resisted but as a new condition of possibility. Thus they prefer to deal pragmatically though aggressively with the **ORANGE** reality of commercialism and artificialization, those two preeminently "Dutch" historical concerns which today loom large over huge patches of the earth. These offices are part of the experiment one might call "Holland, Inc.," the artificially produced economic hybrid which has emerged as an alternative to the Rhineish welfare state model which has dominated Europe for the last fifty years, and the free market Anglo-American model which has established the United States as the single world superpower and reestablished Great Britain as a major player in the world market. This latter experiment is responsible not only for the emergence of these and other young Dutch offices but for the **BIG SOFT ORANGE** conditions from which they, and this exhibition, emerge. The exhibition thus focuses on Leidsche Rijn, an extension of more than 30,000 houses for the city of Utrecht, and one of the first privately developed housing initiatives in the Netherlands. Each of the featured offices participated in the design and development of one aspect of Leidsche Rijn. These range from Max.1's masterplan developed with Crimson, to One Architecture's suburban housing project, to NL Architecture's recently completed little industrial facility.

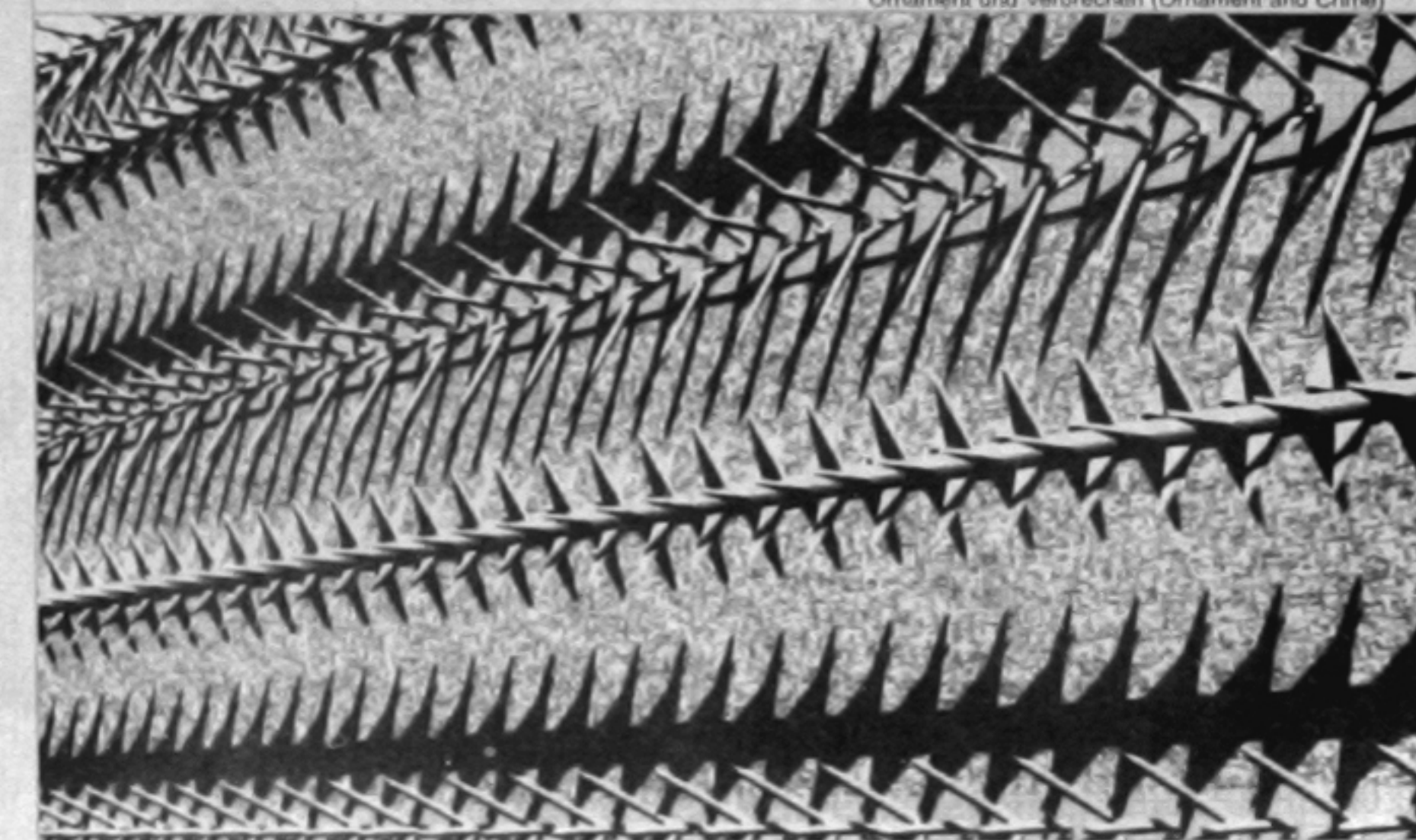
Michael Speaks

Projects from Leidsche Rijn and others by Crimson, Max.1, NL Architects, and One Architecture will be on view at Storefront for Art and Architecture from February 12 - March 13 and Columbia University in Avery Hall from February 1-March 12. Later this year Big Soft Orange will inaugurate the Logan Gallery at California College of Arts and Crafts, San Francisco followed by a run in Los Angeles at Form Zero Gallery and Bookstore in early September. For more information on Big Soft Orange events, visit www.onearchitecture.nl/bsos

NL Architects is an Amsterdam based office. The four principals, Pieter Bannenberg, Walter van Dijk, Kamiel Klaasse and Mark Linnemann, officially opened their practice in January 1997, but shared workspace already since the early nineties. All were educated at Delft University while living in Amsterdam. Their 'commuting' office started while carpooling between Amsterdam and Delft (in that sense they like to think of themselves as autodidactic; NL's recurrent fascination with mobility and tarmac perhaps could be traced back to being educated on the highway). Two members of the team graduated together in 1991, the other two in 1995. Very often their projects focus on ordinary aspects of everyday life, including the unappreciated or negative, that are enhanced or twisted in order to bring to the fore the unimagined potential of the things that surround us.

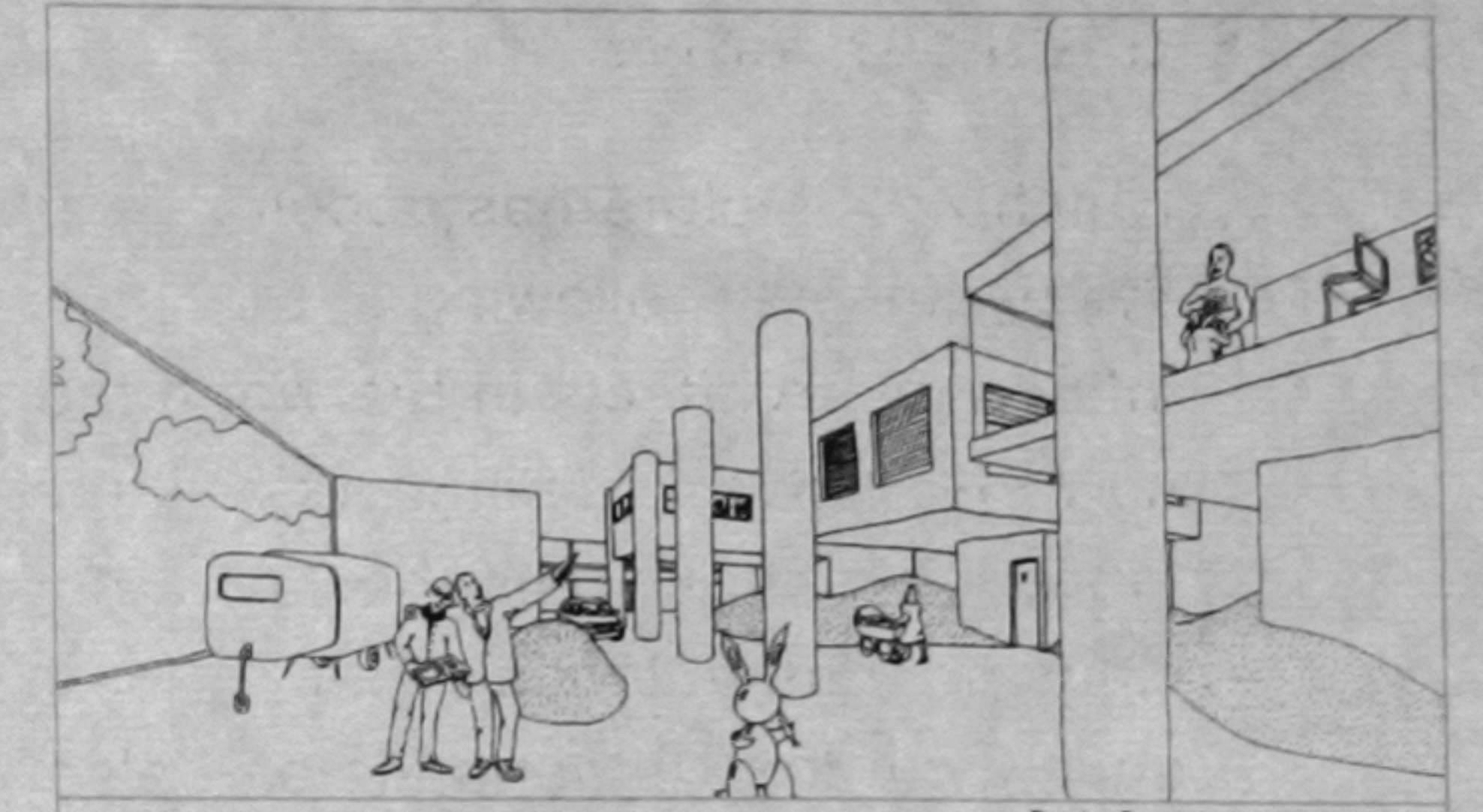
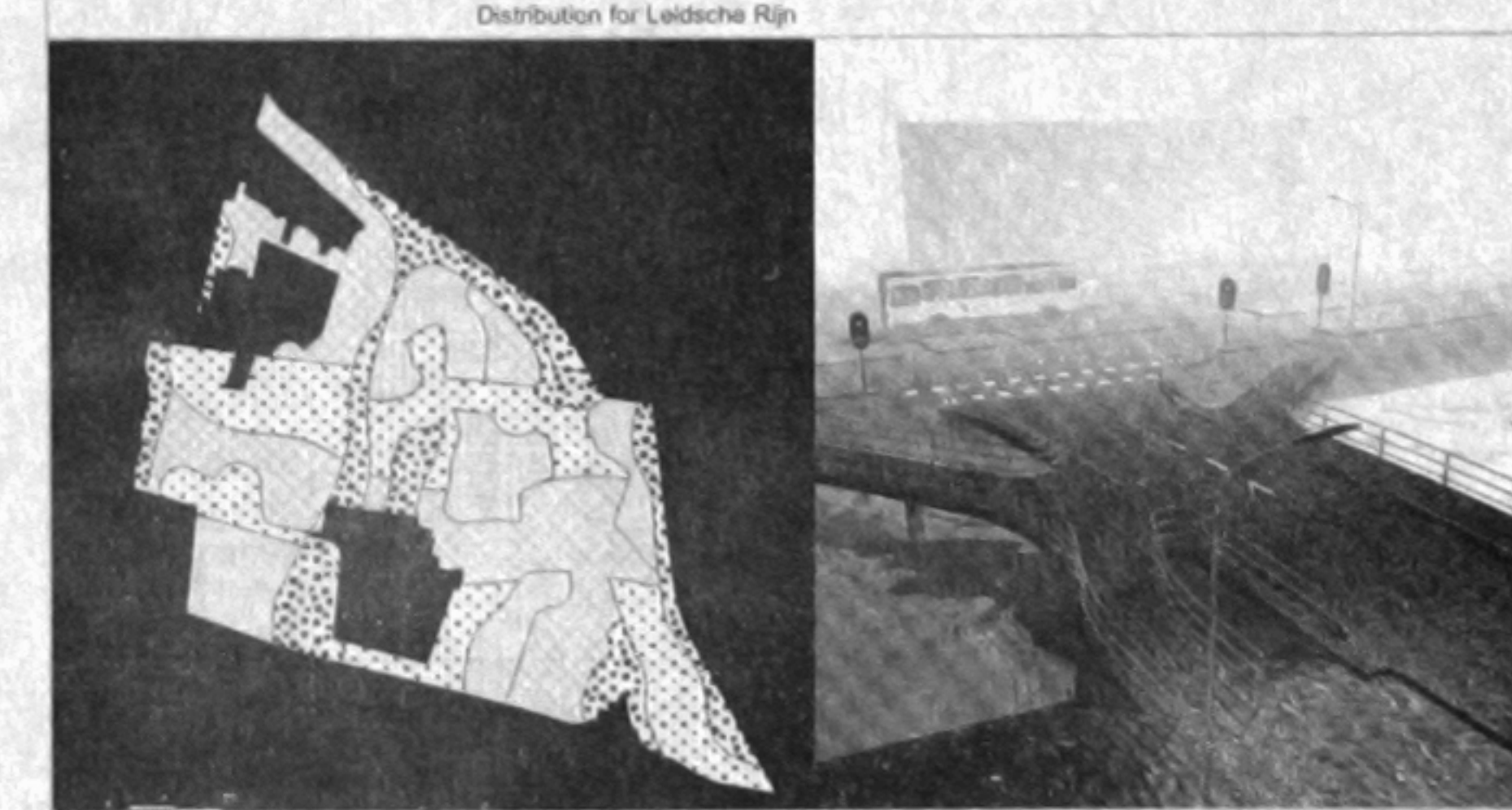


NL. ARCHITECTS



Max. 1 was founded in 1994 by Rients Dijkstra and Rianne Makkink when they were asked to 'do' the Masterplan for a 30,000 houses extension of the city of Utrecht. Until then, Max. 1 had designed and built only one house. Since then the office has exploded - 20 people working there now on a 400 m2 office space - and has been establishing itself firmly in all fields of design: furniture, interiors, bridges, buildings, infrastructure, cities and large-scale planning.

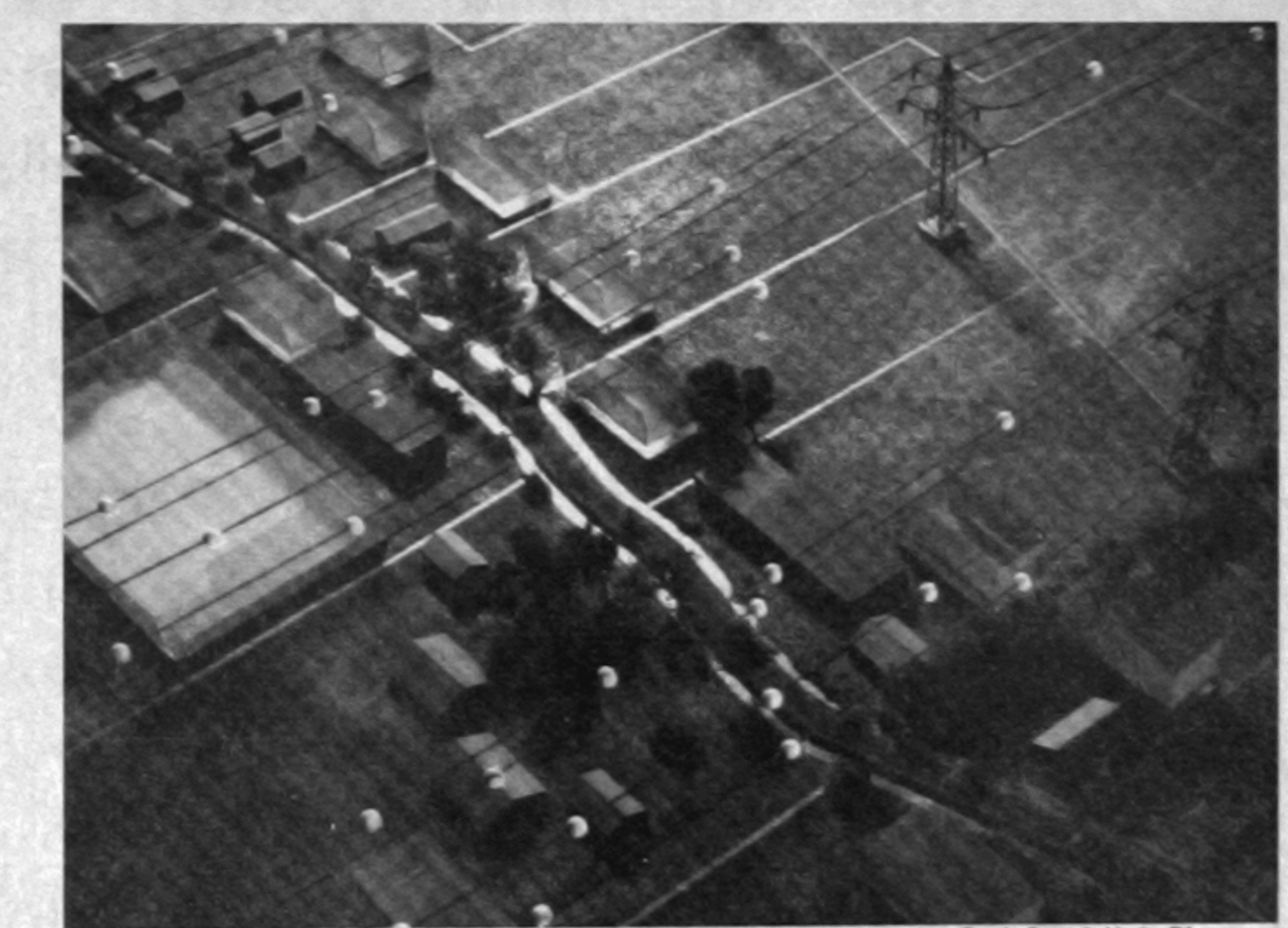
MAX. 1



Crimson is a Rotterdam collective of architectural historians who also investigate urban planning. Members include: Ewout Dorman, Ernst van der Hoeven, Michelle Provoost, Wouter Vansliphout, Cassandra Wilkins, with Chantal van der Zijl and Fenna Haakma Wagenaar.

"The lack of spatial coherence in what we used to call the periphery seems to make the objects floating around there more singularly beautiful. You can wonder at the nice ass of a police officer, the beautiful geometry of a high rise building or the fluffy charm of a sheep without having to see them as part of a coherent structure, like for example public space. The un-determinedness of exurbia and suburbia holds more urban promises than urbia itself. What we are after is a new kind of urban tissue created by slamming together bits of the good, cultural, civic, central city with bits of the bad, poor, criminal, post-public and post-industrial, suburban city. The possibilities of combining the Art world with suburban mayhem seemed especially attractive. We showed that a row of suburban houses could border on an art space so that critics would analyse the goings on in the households as if it were conceptual art. We also merged the art gallery with the gallery of an apartment-building so that you would pass through one of Damien Hirst's pigs before opening the door to your house. When asked to do a show there, we convinced the Boijmans Museum in Rotterdam to temporarily have the municipal toleration zone for heroin prostitutes in their courtyard."

CRIMSON



ONE ARCHITECTURE

One Architecture is an Amsterdam-based architecture and planning office. Partners in the office are Matthijs Bouw and Joost Meuwissen. Its aim is to make realistic and new architecture and planning. The theoretical agenda of the office is not only advanced through the architectural and urban projects. Frequent texts and exhibition installations complement the work. Both partners teach at different educational institutions in the Netherlands and abroad, and publish regularly. Joost Meuwissen is the professor Städtebau u. Entwerfen at the TU Graz, Austria.

